



The Future of Downtown: An Equity Vision for the economic core of the City

VISION STATEMENT

Downtown San Francisco has been a major job center for the City and the region, an attraction for local and international visitors, a destination for shopping, and a hub for arts and culture. The Financial District has been impacted by the shift to remote work, hurting our workforce, small businesses, surrounding communities, and impacting public funds for critical resident services. Our City leaders are calling for programs, investments, and policy changes supporting our Downtown's future. The Equity Council sees Downtown as an opportunity to create a neighborhood for all and is stepping in to engage in collective solutions.

[Equity communities](#) have extraordinary cultural resources, art expressions, and small businesses to awaken the heart of the city. The Equity Council's vision for Downtown includes policy suggestions to support the economic participation of equity communities; to celebrate the cultural and neighborhood identities that symbolize the diversity of San Francisco; to foster community gathering spaces; and to create affordable housing and jobs.

Economic Participation:

Nurturing a **thriving economic ecosystem** will be at the forefront of the revitalization of Downtown. This ecosystem will support locally owned community based businesses to sell and showcase their goods and services in both new spaces and pop-ups to foster creativity, innovation, and inclusivity. It will leverage the combination of locally owned community based businesses and corporate tenants to draw in consumers, create more foot traffic, and infuse economic vitality into the city.

Downtown will ensure **wealth building opportunities** including living wage jobs for equity communities. Community based businesses will have the financial and administrative support to open downtown.

Cultural Identities:

The **cultural heritage** of equity communities is essential to the future of downtown. Downtown will serve as repositories of historical information by telling diverse stories through food, music, arts, and culture. Community leadership will ensure that the stories of our diverse populations are preserved and shared. Specific spaces for cultural arts and expression will encourage residents and visitors to explore and engage with equity communities beyond Downtown, fostering meaningful connections to our neighborhoods.

Community Gathering Places:

Theaters, auditoriums, art galleries, and public open spaces will celebrate the richness of equity communities and the diversity of the city through cultural events, presentations, fundraisers, and exhibitions. Events and celebrations will be affordable to low income populations and youth. Spaces will be designed with the appropriate equipment to enable equity communities to easily put on cultural events, musical, visual and performing arts events, presentations, exhibitions, fundraisers and gatherings. Spaces will be available and affordable to artists in equity communities to live, work, create, collaborate, and showcase their work.

Affordable Housing Options:

Housing will be available to low income households including families cultivating a diverse and equitable residential neighborhood. Artists will have flexible spaces to live, produce, and display their work. All downtown residents will have access to services and public amenities.

Educational Institutions

A tech-focused educational institution downtown will contribute towards innovation where students from equity communities can contribute with creative ideas. The institutions and their students will help catalyze economic recovery by attracting more people and resources downtown. A diverse student population will contribute to greater innovation and will support good jobs in equity communities.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The following are a set of actions to help bring this vision into fruition:

CITY AGENCIES

- Work directly with community based organizations and nonprofits to ensure equity communities have the information and resources to take advantage of funding opportunities and programs.
- Allocate resources to support equity communities to navigate the City's application process.
- Use equity plans to guide land use and economic decisions for an equitable distribution of resources specific to equity communities.
- Work with nonprofits that service equity communities and help them purchase buildings for commercial and residential uses.
- OEWD funding for cultural events and activities presented by equity communities.
- Expand contractors of color particularly Black owned businesses and workers.

DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDERS

- Work with cultural districts and equity communities on tangible and quantifiable partnerships and pathways to expand and ensure participation of equity community small businesses and cultural organizations in the Financial District with Union Square, SoMa, Chinatown, Mission, Tenderloin and Fillmore/Western Addition..
- Work with cultural districts and equity communities in the programming and activation of public spaces and ground floor spaces .
- Identify spaces for educational institutions

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Share the Equity Vision for Downtown with community partners
- Request equity community small business and cultural organizations to participate in future funding opportunities and programs to activate public spaces and ground floor spaces including Powell Street and Market Street.
- Strengthen cultural districts through tangible & quantifiable programs to expand presence of equity communities Downtown and throughout the rest of San Francisco